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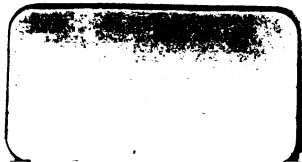
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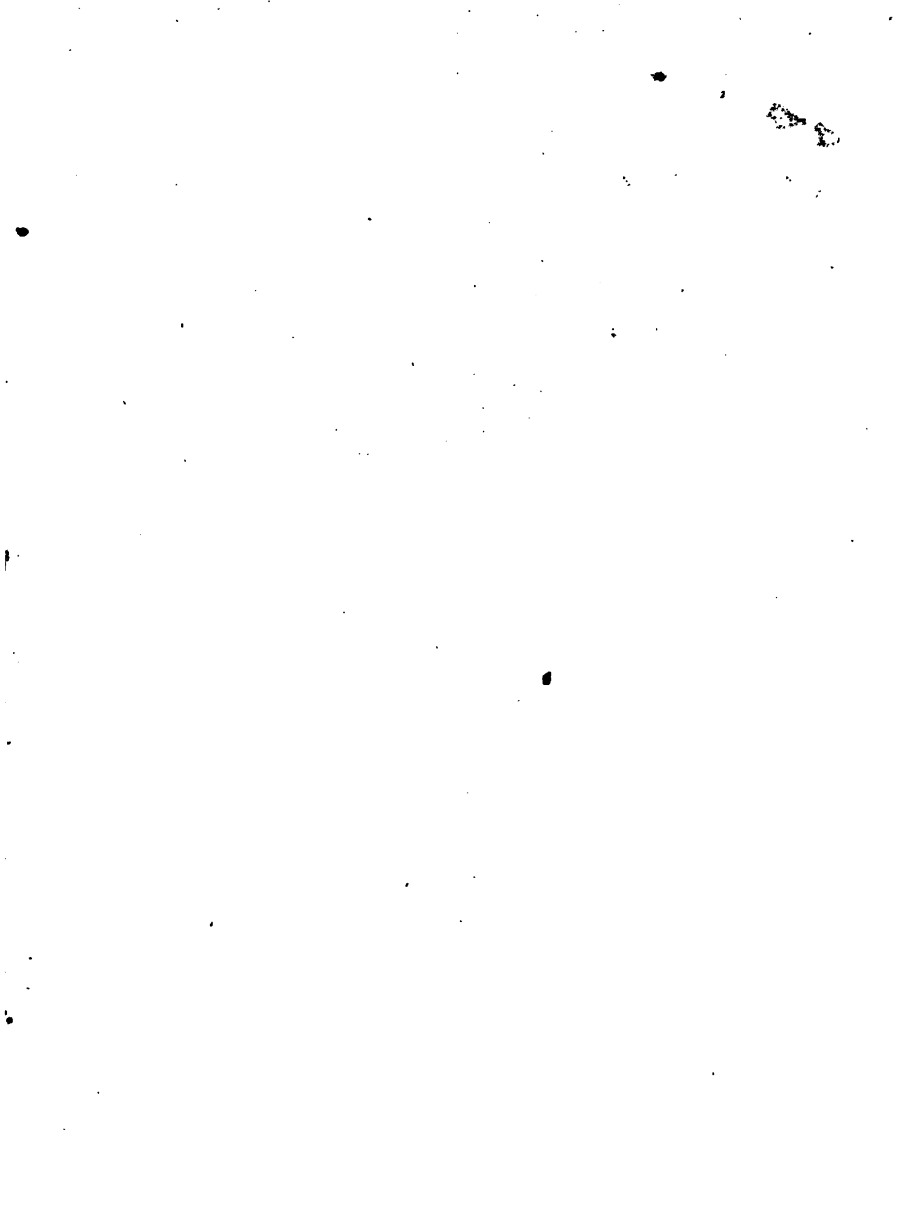


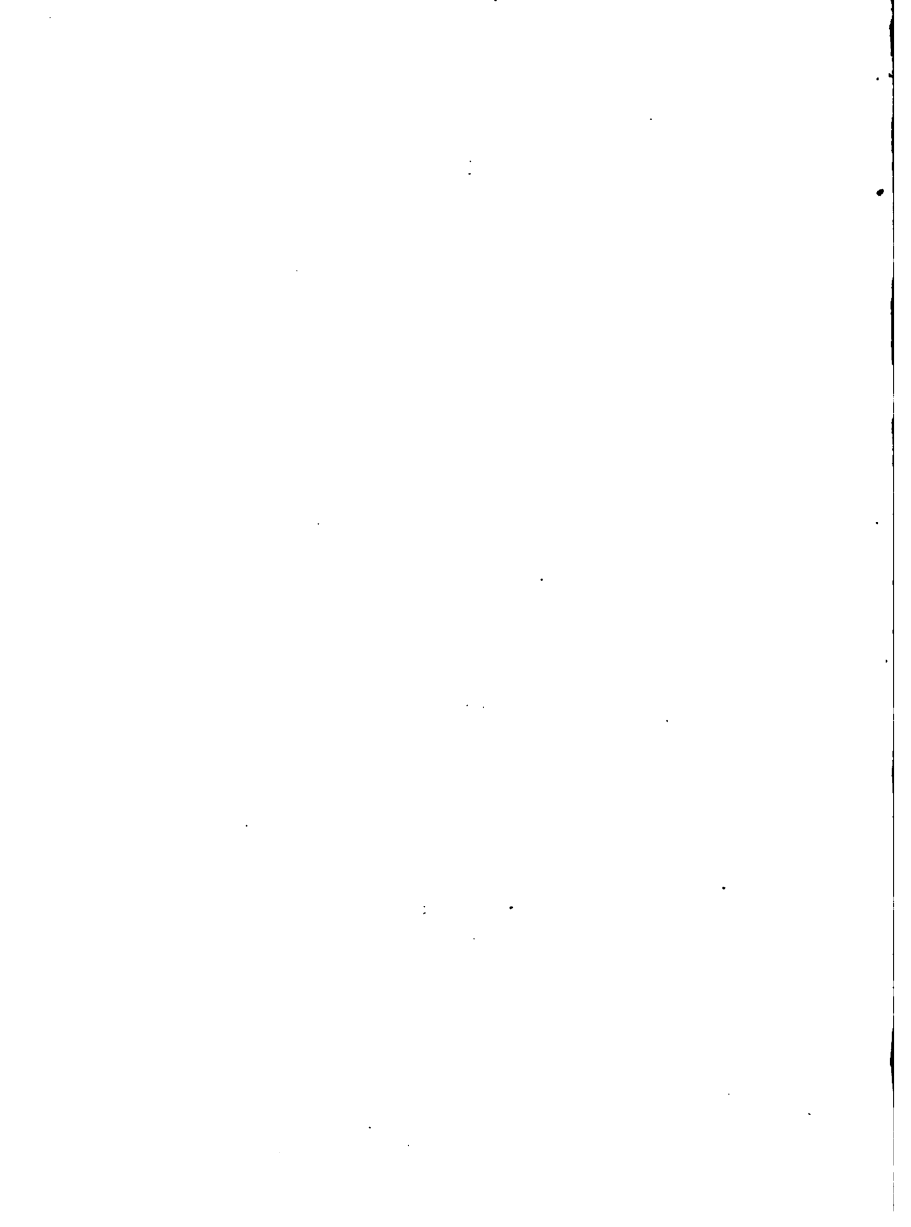
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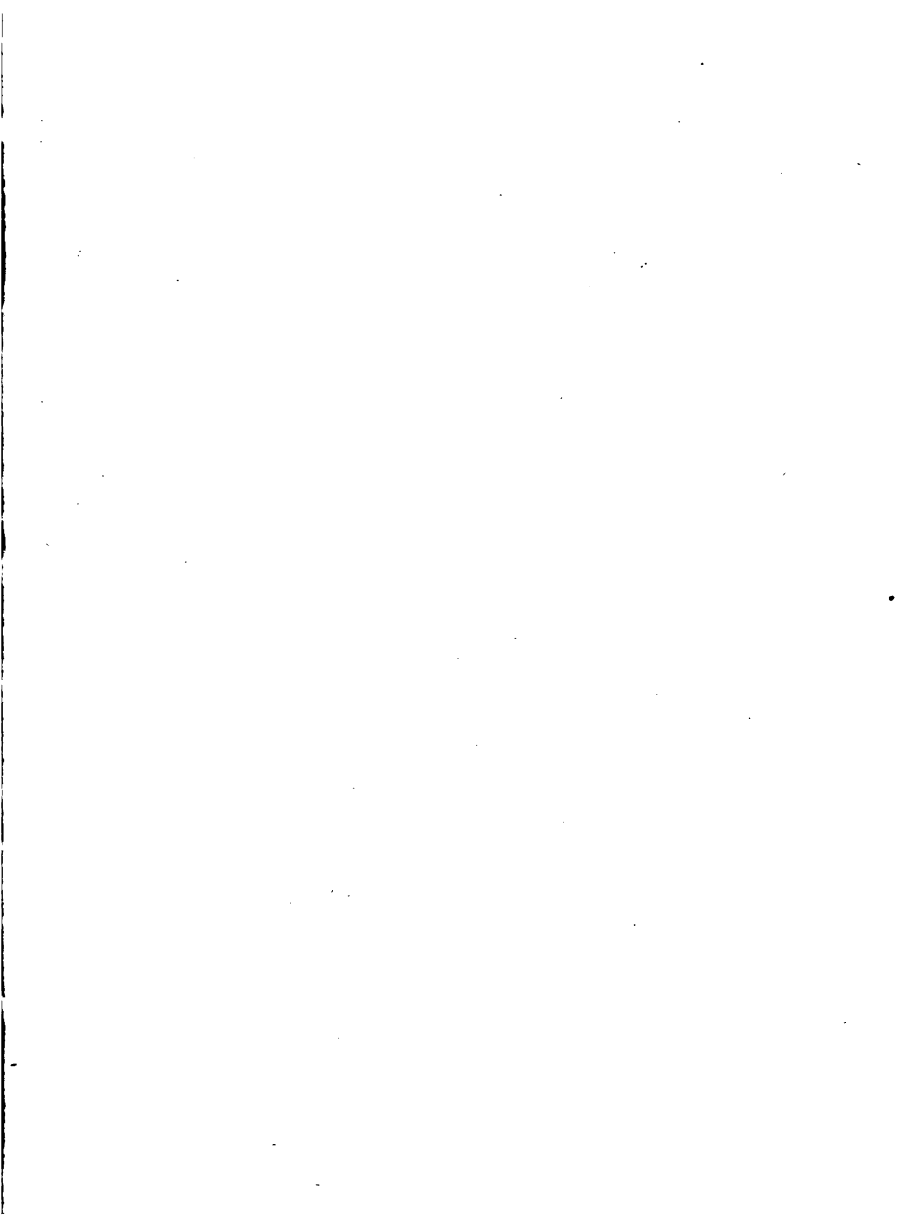






The Answer
And Other Poems





THE ANSWER

THE WITCH

HER JEST

THE WATER-KISS

LONGING

THE MOTHER'S SONG

A RAINY MORNING

INSOUCIANCE

TO YOU

SONNET

Copyright 1915
by
Hiram Powers Dilworth

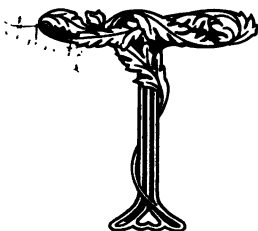
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The Answer And Other Poems

By

Hiram Powers Dilworth

Chicago



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✓

THE ANSWER

Do you seek after friendship now?—after love?
Do you wish me to give you again the trust
I once gave freely as clouds above
Give infinite rains to the heated dust?

II

Come back to thee *now*? Do you know what you ask?
Back to the temple I found so false?
Back to the parlors of Grief, and her task
Of making them ghastly with jest and waltz?

III

Give into thy keeping a delicate thing—
My heart so human and quick to love,
So true where it soundeth its carolling,
And timorous winged as a frightened dove?

IV

O! shudder to mention the sacred name—
The name of love!—you know it not!
Its utterance do thy lips defame!
Its holy white you can only blot!

From "The Lament" (Unpublished)

THE ANSWER

V

My Love must be pure as Christ, and Truth
Is the guardian Saint of that ruby door;
No vicious plea of age or youth
To scatter its virtue to the floor!

VI

My Love must be constant—a generous star
Whose beams shall guide me, whatever the night;
Whose radiance, pure as a silver bar,
Is a magnet sweet, and an holy light.

VII

O false to the virtues I reverence most!
False—false to the truth I fancied thine!
False to thy love and my infinite trust!
False to thy conscience and false to mine!

VIII

To see thee, to touch thee, is terrible pain,
For the one I knew and the one I see
Are as quite apart as the sun and the rain,
And anguish the plane where they agree!

THE ANSWER

IX

Could I listen again to thy voice and say
"This is my soul-mate, sweet and rare?"
If the gloomy night wed the sparkling day,
Shall skies be clearer and earth more fair?

X

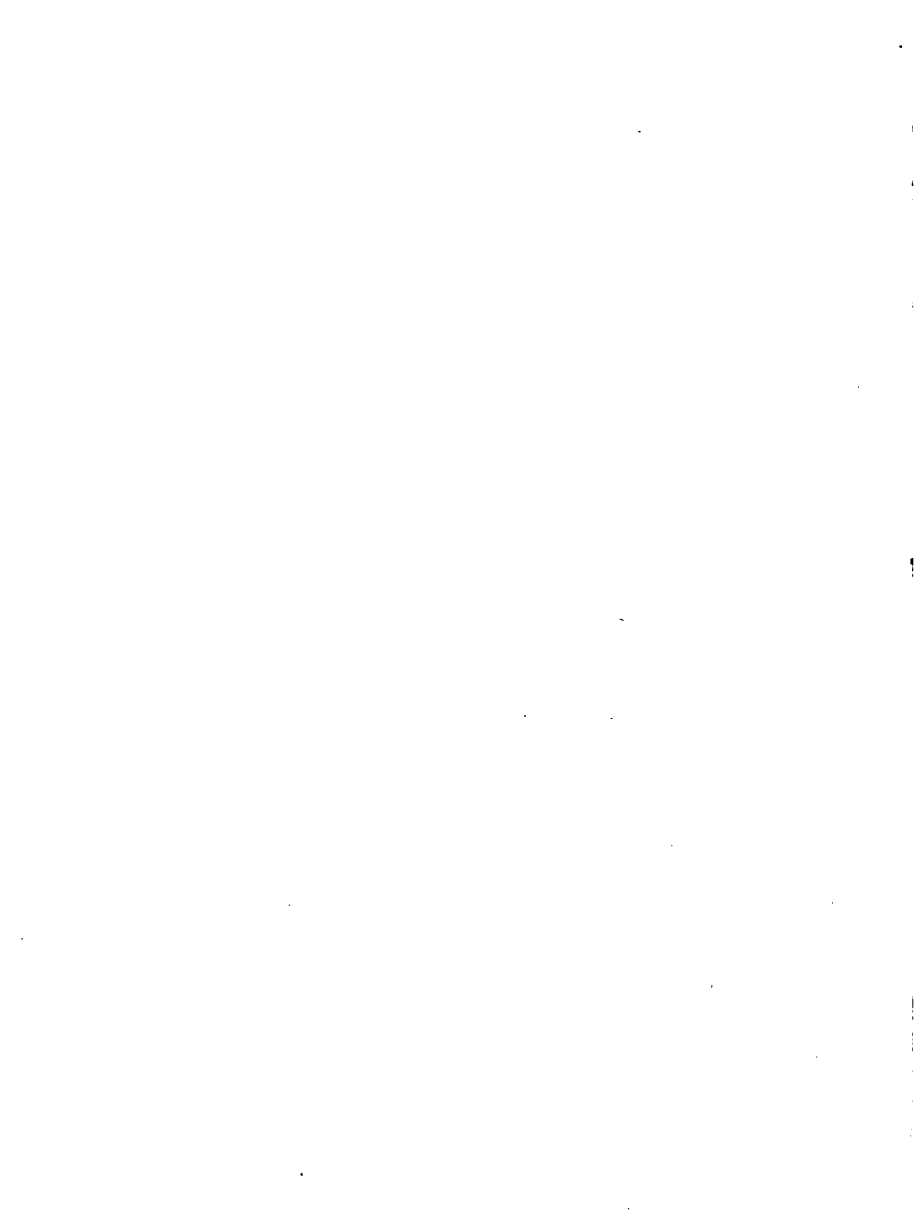
Does the lily blow when a sudden chill
Has left its rime on the stirring bud?
Does the oak show grandly its mighty will
When cancer drinks of its noble blood?

XI

Away! Away from mine ear and mine eye!
Begone from my thought! I will none of thee!
Far out of my life thou must live and must die,
Though my loss be reckoned Eternity!

XII

For when I behold thee, the terrible past
Strikes brutally that which was peace to my sight;
A shadow I fear closes over me fast,
I tremble—I know not with hate or with fright!



THE ANSWER

XIII

Too venomous far thine indifferent tongue,
Too cruel thine action to lighten it now;
On my heart-strings, in silence, these notes have I strung:
"O Love!"—as I knew thee—"My Love! is it *thou?*"

XIV

Away! And yet over the steps of thy years,—
Ay! over thy board and the couch of thy lust,
Shall brood a sad Justice to wash with her tears
Thy will of its poison, thy soul of its dust.

XV

On the page of the past, on the leaf of today,
On the scroll of the future, thy memory's name
Shall write thee a creature of drossiest clay,
Inscribe thee for cowardice, cunning and shame!

XVI

And alas! to the moment of confidence sought,
When you played a proud puppet to fallacies sung!
For the nincompoop's bluster and babble were naught
But a dastard's diseased and degenerate tongue.

XVII

Give thy gifts to another—their dozen and ten—
I have buried a friend! (Is it written above?)
For I scorn with a shudder, strange to me then,
Thine altar of lies and polygamous love.

THE WITCH

I

She came into my garden,
Her dress was foul with soil,
Her face unfair, and everywhere
She had the scars of toil;
Her back was bended as a gourd
Left in the autumn's spoil.

II

God! What have I to answer?—
Methought my hair stood high.
And then she came and said my name
And sat herself close by.
It was a witch's moment when
She looked into mine eye!

III

Lo! Sweet Magician! Wonder!
Along her godless shroud
A shudder rolled, as wisps of gold
Disturb a sunset cloud:
A virgin goddess, whitely robed,
Nor longer was she bowed.

IV

She left me dumb and dazzled,
But she came back again,

THE WITCH

Like Iris comes when thunder-drums
Beat off the chilly rain;
There was no day without her, and
The night was full of pain.—

V

Black-breasted night whose talons
Are cruel as they are deep,
And in whose flight the inky height
Appalls the dayward sweep:
Alas! that human hearts must break
And human eyes must weep!

VI

O sorcery triumphant!
O bridal breath from Hell!
The maid has left!—I am bereft
Of her I love so well!
And I can see she leers at me,
Exulting in the spell!

VII

The swarth moon hurls her shadows,
The weak stars tremble there,
The hideous witch, through snarl and switch,
Combs out her filthy hair.—
Ah, no! The sickly sense is false!
The truant Love is fair!

HER JEST

They say my face is morning bright,
A dawn across a gentle night,
And that my loveliness is told
Only in words of singing gold.
Ah, foolish men! Can they not see
It is thyself astir in me?

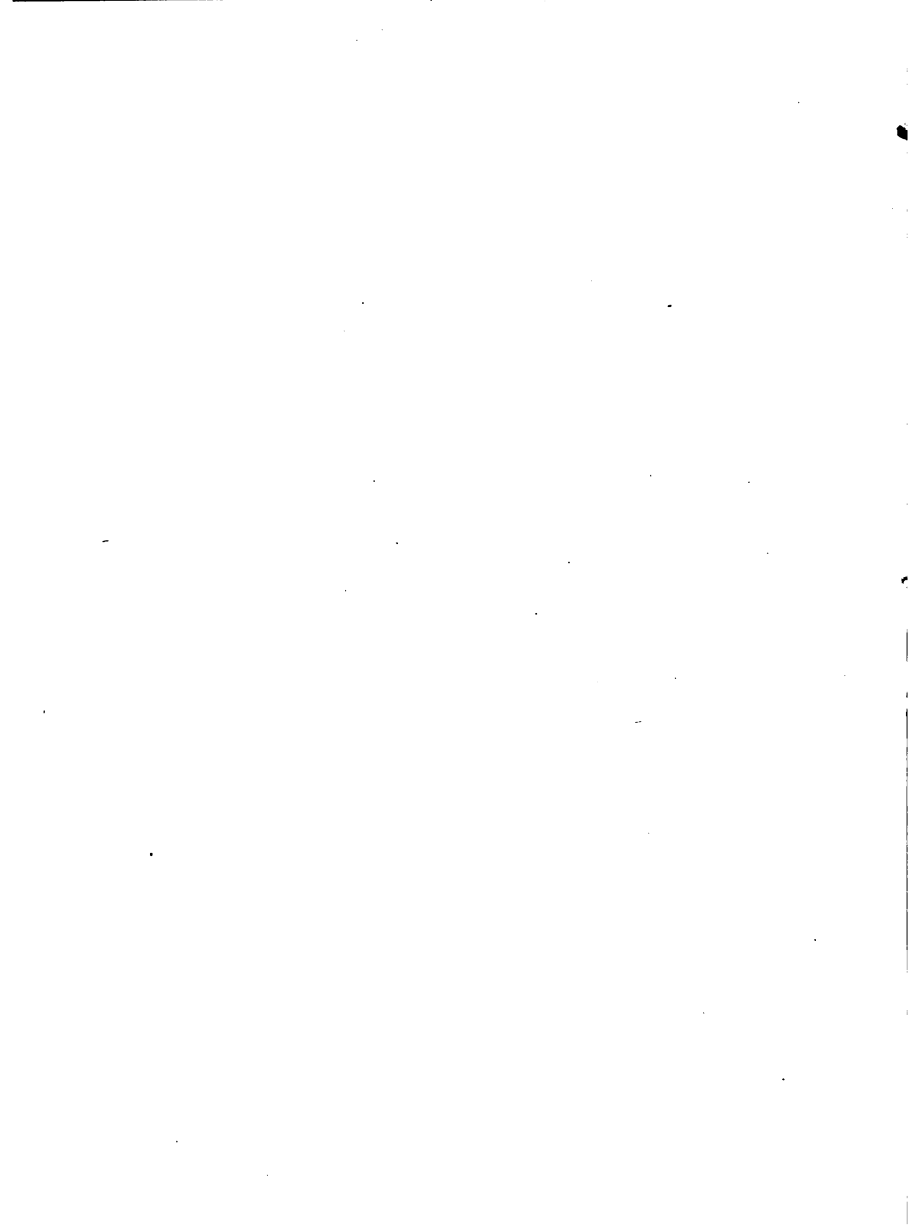
THE WATER-KISS

I

Here are my lips! For what?—Can you guess?
Happily bubbly their liquid caress!
Bend to them—touch them—they offer you health—
They tell you the secret of conquest and wealth;
Drink!—for my draughts are delectably rare,
And my kiss is as pure as my sculpture is fair.

II

What is the charm of a young water-maid?
A cool water-kiss just fresh from her throat—
Just soft from her lips—unreserved—undismayed—
And purling a plashy and innocent note!
Merrily—momently—witchingly wove
With murmurous blisses of health and of love!



LONGING

I

The spirit of the day broods low;
His breath is misty as the rain.
He shakes his gossamer of snow,
And shrouds himself again.

II

Despair sits grinning in my sky;
His face is sharp as agony.
He blows my dust in every eye,
And then comes back to me.

THE MOTHER'S SONG

I

Under beams of sunny gold,
Nestled softly in moss and mold,
Day-dreams glinting about thy shrine,—
Tell me what dreamest Baby mine!
Swing thee—sing thee—bring thee so
From the oak to my heart—to the oak and fro!

II

Over thy forehead, white as fleece,
Slumber lighted with guileless peace,
Pure as pearl clouds gathering up,
Soft as the yellow of butter-cup,
Breathe thee kisses, gentle one,
Presses and blisses for baby son.

III

Silver moment and golden time,
Shadow cradle and growth sublime;
Ripen the blossom as man may will,
Thou through all art baby still!
Swing thee—bring thee, fairest born,
From the cold world to my bosom warm!

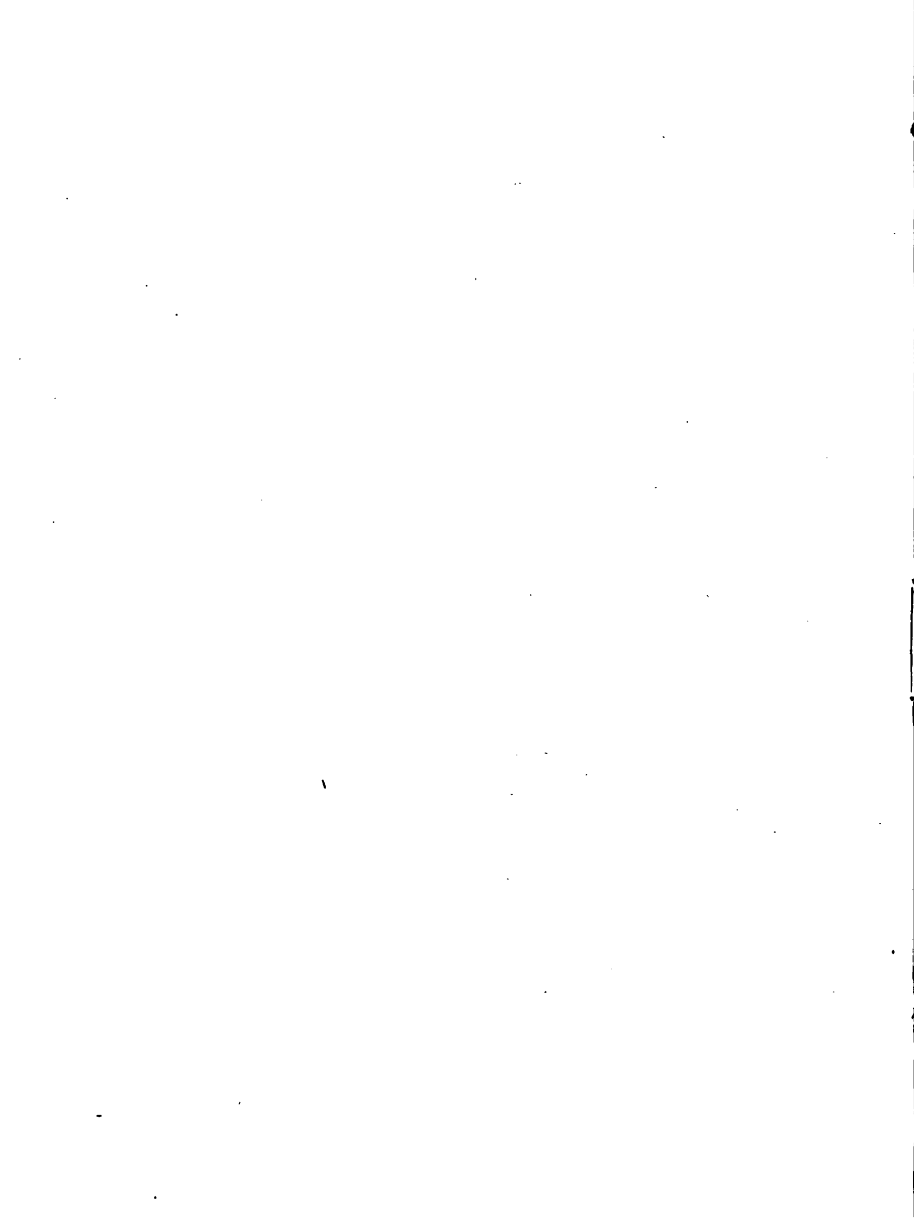
A RAINY MORNING

I

The day weeps silently with wretched winter rain—
And it's drip—drip—drip!
It draws a cloud about its face as if in pain—
While it's drip—drip—drip!
Too free those tears to hide them in the sky,
They trickle through, and neither pause nor dry,
And solemn—silent—sadly does the day complain
With its drip—drip—drip!

II

My heart weeps quietly with bitter burning blood—
And it's drop—drop—drop!
It drowns its fire in its scalding scarlet flood—
While it's drop—drop—drop!
Too white the folly of that fateful day
To bear the sudden taking it away—
To leave the marble and to languish in the mud—
Ah, the drop—drop—drop!



INSOUCIANCE

I

Bring me a measure, pipe and jug,
I'll fill to the brim my faithful mug;
And the fragrant smoke I shall blow away
In a misty dreaming of just today!

II

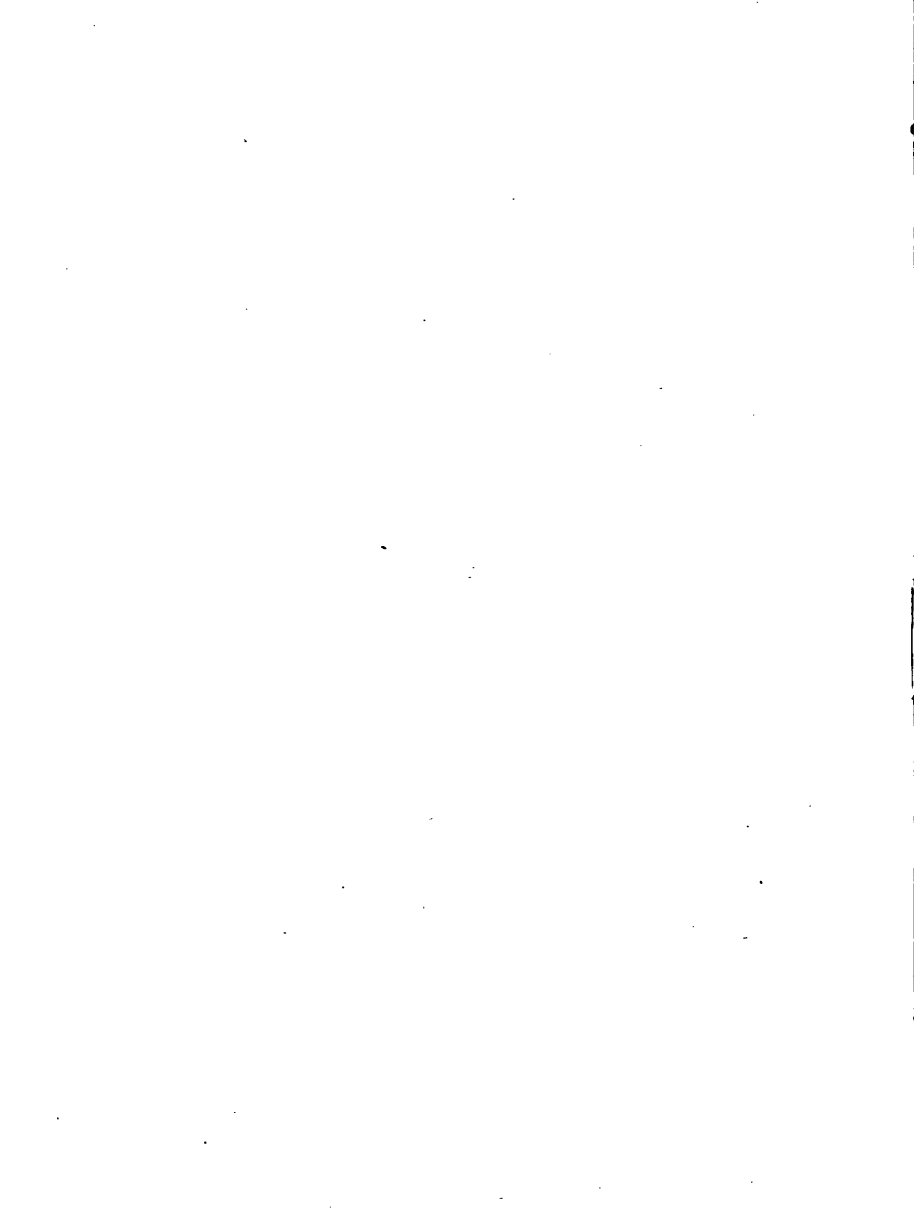
I'm prince of my heart's contentedness;
My kingdom's a summer wilderness,
My duty's the pledge of the trusty jug,
And pleasure's the strength of the scented drug.

III

Should the thought of my sin invest me here,
I would drink to the thought and feel no fear;
Should the demon of sorrow shade my sight,
I would laugh him avexed and force his flight.

IV

O! have what you will of your heart's desire,
Be it greed of the brute or the poet's fire;
But leave me a measure, pipe and jug
And a generous part of the friendly drug.



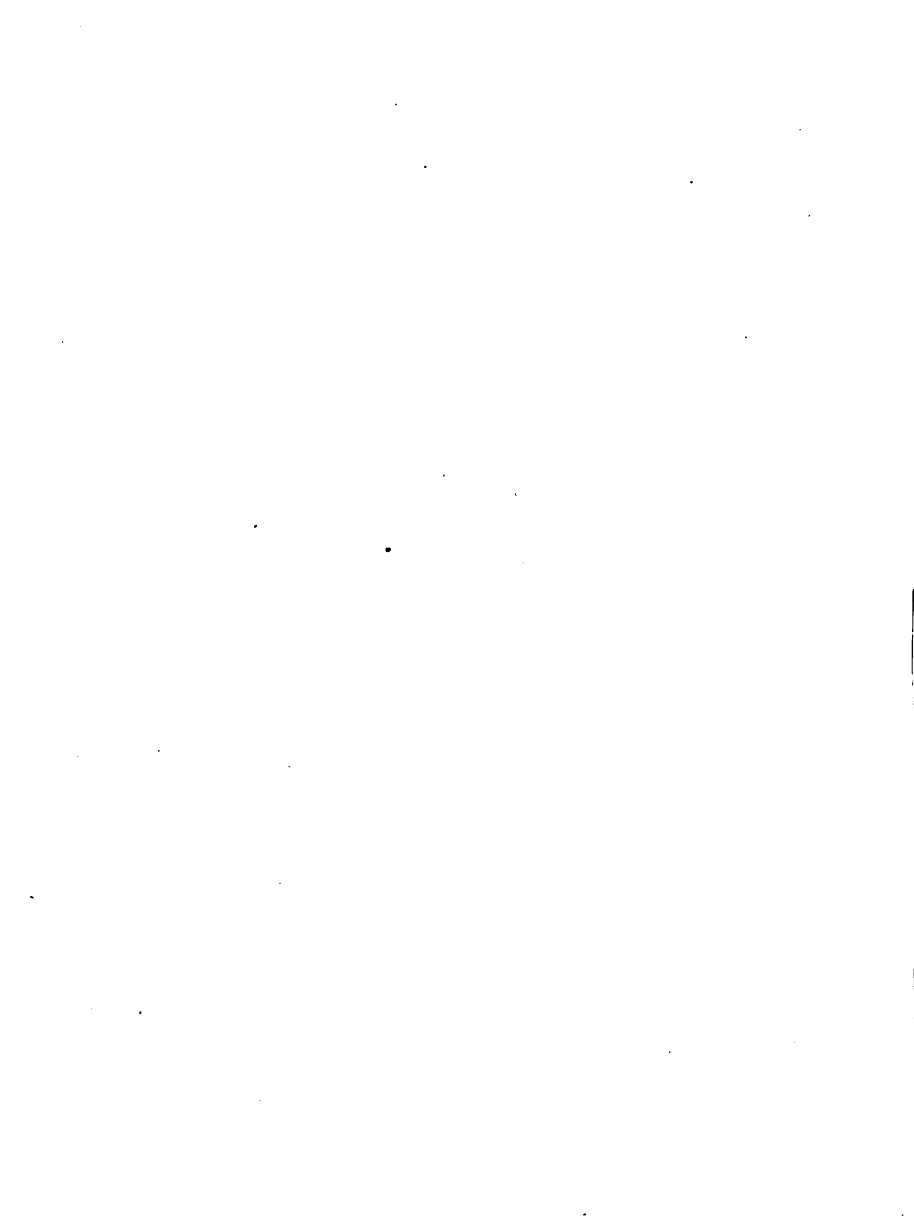
TO YOU

Though thou hast all that Life can give to thee—
Youth, Love and Happiness—it were the best
To slight no gift thy young heart may request:
Accept the *past*—thy father's memory!

—*Daddy.*

SONNET

Whether the evening burns with afterglow,
Or morning laughs with bird-song and slow breeze,
No touch of Nature's loveliness can please
Like winter's starry sky and world of snow.
For in that maddened moment was it so,
When you and I, beneath December trees,
Robbed God's pure silence of its fragile keys
And opened Heaven! Violets may blow—
The sunflowers stare—the wheat stand yellow high—
Not dear to me are they as winter night
When rushing mem'ries brim my laggard eye
And Love once more smiles distantly in flight.
As chaste as thou the guiltless snow, and by
The Christmas moon made spiritually white!





Stovel-Stevens Co. — Printers — Chicago

